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conceals the nature of the objects can hardly be considered relevant. The change is precisely what makes possible both the question and the answer; as James remarks, there is no difference between the object as it was and the object as it is, when once the question is asked.

It is along these general lines that pragmatism seeks, and must seek, to reconcile the relativity of our experience to the bodily organism with genuine objectivity. Whether it can give a consistent interpretation of all the facts which it behooves philosophy to consider is a question which the future alone can determine. The only criticism, however, that can be effective is a criticism which meets it on its own ground, for in philosophy of all subjects there is a sad truth in the remark of Mrs. Carlyle that "it is the mixing of things that is the great bad."

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#### PROFESSOR JAMES AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION.

The psychology of religion is the distinctly American contribution both to psychology and to the study of religion. The Germans have now taken up the subject in their characteristically thorough manner, and a journal, *Zeitschrift für Religionspsychologie*, is being published, whose purpose it is to collect authentic data of the religious experience. But it still remains true that one needs only English in order to read the authorities in this field.

To Prof. William James more than to any other worker in this field is to be ascribed the wide present-day interest in the psychological study of religion. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* appeared only eleven years ago, but within this brief time a new branch of psychology has been fully established and a considerable literature upon the subject has sprung up. At least two other important studies had been published before this one, but it was only with its appearance that a clearly defined and wide-spread movement was started, the object of which was to collect, analyze and describe the data of religion, and to attempt to interpret and evaluate these data in their relation to the rest of human life.

Professors Starbuck and Coe<sup>1</sup> seem to have been the first psy-

<sup>1</sup> E. D. Starbuck, *A Study of Conversion*, 1897, and *Psychology of Religion*, 1899; George A. Coe, *The Spiritual Life*, 1900.

chologists systematically to collate and study large numbers of cases of the religious experience. Professor Pratt has also done good service in this direction. They used the questionnaire method for gathering their data. Coe confined himself to his own students and to classes of religious people of which he had personal knowledge, such as the ministers of a Methodist Conference. This is a safe method, for his personal knowledge of the bias of his "subjects" helped him greatly in drawing right conclusions. Starbuck has also shown a caution in using haphazard materials which later collectors might well imitate.

Those who have worked with President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, have sent carefully prepared question forms broadcast and have thus obtained answers from people of many classes and interests. This method of collecting general and uncritical answers from a large number of unknown people may have some value, but in reading the results I have thought that these replies show how people will respond to set questions rather than reveal the real meaning of religion in human lives. Such replies concerning such an intimate experience as conversion may reveal certain general types of this experience, but it is certain, I believe, that the one thing not revealed by such a collection of answers will be the essential meaning of the religious experience. In the lot there will be some serious and valuable answers, but how are these to be recognized?

There can be but one way to get valuable results by this method, and that is for the student of these replies to have in himself a right standard of what a religious experience ought to be and for him to apply this, his personal standard, to the cases he is studying. This is not high-handed imposition by the investigator of his personal religious taste upon all these data gathered from many other lives, for this bringing the religious experience under question to the bar of his own religious consciousness is the only possible method by which significant results can be had from such a study. This is what all of these collectors of answers about personal religious experience are forced to practise, although some of them do not appear to be conscious of their real situation. Otherwise the collection of data proves to be but a meaningless jumble.

The method of Professor James is much more fruitful. He selects a number of positive cases of religious experiences and tries to analyze and to understand the significance of these. He approaches a case from different points of interest, until one feels that he has

gotten all out of that experience that one man can get out of another's report of his interior experience. He announces at first that his is to be a study of personal documents. He invites us to attend to a psychologically "descriptive survey of those religious propensities" of man, "those more developed subjective phenomena recorded in literature produced by articulate and fully self-conscious men, in works of piety and autobiography."<sup>2</sup>

In the twenty lectures of his book Professor James treats a variety of religious experiences of widely varying types. He frankly chooses radical and unusual types of religious experience, thinking thus to get the thing he is after better isolated for purposes of study. Many objections have been raised to this method of selection, it being claimed that the result is a caricature of religion, just because eccentric and abnormal instances are presented. This criticism is just in part, for we do not have here a complete account of religious experience, and the cases cited are so pronounced as to give a decidedly wild complexion to experienced religion. However it can not be denied that the cases given are true religious experiences, and some of them are typical of large classes of religious experience.

Professor James's volume means to be a psychology of religion. It cites cases and talks about these, and yet there is little formal psychological analysis of the experiences given. In these pages there is clear analysis of religious experience, but it is of a broadly sympathetic sort rather than a minute scientific scrutiny of particulars. The usual order of the study is, first some brilliant paragraphs on the subject in general, as those on "Saintliness," which show profound insight into the meaning of the experience, and then a striking case is cited. But the cases are given as confirming the insights, rather than being so much data from which conclusions are drawn. The experiences cited impress me as being striking and interesting stories which our author is telling us between periods of intense study of our subject. These anecdotes illustrate aptly the point we are considering but they were not strictly necessary to the progress of the study.

In speaking thus I do not mean that the cases cited are not authentic cases, nor that they are not enlightening. They simply do not impress me as of great importance to this study. The real study here is not of these varieties of religious experiences, but it is the problem of the meaning of religious experience itself. The contribution made here is not that of a scientific investigation of par-

<sup>2</sup> James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 3.

ticular instances of religious experiences. The real value of this book is in the record which it contains of the religious insights of a man who has a great genius in the sympathetic interpretation of human life. James's comments upon the experiences of others, acute as they are and usually true, tell us much more about James's own inner life than they do about his subjects. As announced at first, this book is a study of human documents, and fortunately for us the documents are mostly written out of the sympathetic insight of the author himself.

In reading Professor James's general work on psychology I am continually astonished by his penetrating and unexpected analyses of the contents of consciousness. Scarcely any element of consciousness, however unusual and undefined, has escaped his notice and appreciation. So intimately revealing are some of his insights that they produce an uncanny feeling in us, and we wonder who has revealed to this scientist our dark thoughts which until now have lain half-hidden and unformed in our own conscious mental processes. Such revelations as these are the result of a genius for noting the unusual in human experience.

The employment of this ability to see the unusual and half-formed elements of consciousness results in a valuable contribution to the general field of psychological observation. There is danger however that the results of such insight into the hidden places of the mind will get over-emphasized. We are so fascinated by being introduced to queer parts of ourselves, whose existence we but vaguely suspected, that we are liable to forget that after all these oddities do not constitute a very large or very influential portion of our every day working characters. We needed a genius to reveal to us these outlying possessions of our conscious life, but now we need to use much common sense in order not to waste too much time on these peripheral interests, thus neglecting the vastly more significant central experiences of our lives. It is doubtless one of the temptations of psychology to emphasize too much the unusual and abnormal life experiences, for these stand out and challenge attention.

The above is a general criticism which I wish to apply to *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The instances of religious experience selected here are true instances. They are more than usually interesting, perhaps just because they are so various. But the cases here selected are too unusual to afford a basis for any very general conclusions as to religion. These unique and even eccentric experiences can not fairly be said to represent the experiences of re-

ligion which is the directing force in the lives of an unnumbered multitude of present-day men and women. And even in the lives of the men and women cited, these experiences were but moments of unusual exaltation, and not the daily religious inspiration by which they lived out their lives. It is valuable to know about these striking religious experiences, but a great number of deeply religious people shake their heads and say that this is not what they mean by religion. Professor James could have obtained much more valuable, but doubtless much less interesting, material without going so far afield. But as I have said, these selected instances do not very much affect the truth or value of Professor James's treatment of religion, for his knowledge of religion came but slightly from these cases.

The great value of Professor James's work is that it forces upon the attention of students of religion the religious experience itself. Since this movement for the psychological study of religion has been launched it will never be quite as easy or comfortable again for theorizers about religion to pursue their way all heedless of the central fact of their subject. It is significant that just in a time when the theoretical explainers of religion, and many of the preachers of religion, had made up their minds that religious conversion was an emotional illusion, the psychologists came forward with irrefutable proofs of the reality and value of this experience. Thus science, which had been thought to be the enemy of religion, came to its rescue.

The five essential elements of the religious life, which Professor James gives in his conclusion, are admirable.<sup>8</sup> But this summary does not come from the variegated cases of religion cited in the special sense in which the author indicates that it does. This knowledge of religion comes from a profound and sympathetic understanding of religion as a whole, and in the last analysis this sympathetic insight is due to a personality peculiarly gifted for such understanding. The method used in this book can scarcely serve as a model for those who continue the study of religion in the empirical spirit. This work, by its character, is necessarily only a beginning. It has served its purpose of shocking the rest of us into a proper attention to the religious experience, but a much more careful and fundamental analysis of this experience is now necessary.

I think Prof. James H. Leuba has gone as far in the psychological method of studying religion as any other. Leuba objects to

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 485.

both the "intellectualistic and affectivistic conception of religion," for neither an intellectual interest nor a feeling can explain the origin of religion. Religion arises out of man's distinctive characteristic as "thinking desire" in the Aristotelian sense.<sup>4</sup> He says that "active religion may properly be looked upon as that portion of the struggle for life in which use is made of the power we roughly characterized as psychic and superhuman."<sup>5</sup> Religion arises from the same natural spring as does non-religious life, i. e., the "will to live," and the only ground for differentiation between the religious and the secular is in the nature of the forces which religion attempts to press into service.

That which differentiates religious life from all other expressions of man's life is not a specific feeling or emotion, nor yet a distinctive impulse, "for there are neither specifically religious motives nor specifically religious feelings."<sup>6</sup> A feeling is just a feeling, no matter what its cause. So religion is characterized only by the peculiar kind of power which it seeks to employ. "There are but three necessary attributes to a religious source of power. It must be a psychic, not a physical power; it must be accessible to man; it must be superhuman."<sup>7</sup>

So religion is an attitude which runs through man's whole life, intellectual and emotional. Religion is not a state either of mind or of emotion, but is one of the ways by which a man seeks his life. It is "a belief in a great and superior psychic power—whether personal or not. A dynamic relation between man and that Higher Power tending to the preservation, the increase and the ennobling of life."<sup>8</sup> Man's thinking, willing and emotional activities are all concerned in the religious attitude.

Now it is evident that Leuba did not reach his conclusion as to the nature of religion by means of psychology in the ordinary definition of this science. Religious feelings are just feelings, like others, he has said. So a psychological analysis of these feelings yields nothing different from that found in the other feelings. No such analysis can find out what is the nature of the object toward which these emotions are directed. Where did Leuba get his definition of the God or "Power" of religion then? To be sure he could

<sup>4</sup> Leuba, *The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, Vol. II, p. 325.

<sup>8</sup> *The Psychical Origin and Nature of Religion*, p. 92.

have found out by empirical observation that religion seeks to employ a different kind of power from that sought in the ordinary life of man, but he does not stop with this observation as to the direction in which religion seeks to go, for he says it is a "dynamic relation between man and that Higher Power." Thus he knows much about religion, but he does not explain by what method he obtained his information.

Psychology can help us in our study of religion, just as anthropology can, by giving us an array of dependable facts concerning religion. The facts gathered by psychology deal with the inner life and are thus nearer to the real center of our interest. But if Leuba is right in maintaining that there are no distinctly religious emotions and feelings then the science of psychology can not carry us very close to the real solution of our problem. Religion itself still eludes us, for we are only psychologizing about the effects which religion produces in the life. The cause of these effects, religion, would always remain unknown.

Leuba says that in his opinion "the amazing discrepancies and contradictions offered by authorized definitions of religion arise from a faulty psychology."<sup>9</sup> To this I agree in part. The definitions of religion with which I am acquainted are all true, as far as they go. Their undependableness arises from their onesidedness, and this may arise from neglecting the psychological side of the study of religion, or from neglecting the ethnological side or the philosophical side of this study.

In the psychology of religion the psychological analysis is not the simple scientific operation which it is usually assumed to be. If the feeling, willing and knowing of religious experience are just common feeling, willing and knowing, then the mere psychological analysis of the religious consciousness will reveal nothing as to the distinctively religious aspect of the experience. The psychophysical parallelist would say that this is just the situation, for that essential meaning or value which constitutes the religious element in the experience can not be reached by the methods of psychology because that value lies not in the existential world but only in the realm of appreciation.

We have just here a good example of how this parallelistic way of explaining human experience must break down. This evaluation is also a fact of consciousness. If our methods of psychical analysis do not reach this item of experience then they must be extended

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

until they can reach it. To be sure the evaluating factor of consciousness is purely subjective, i. e., can only be certainly known by the experiencing consciousness itself, and therefore can only be found by the introspective method of analysis. Each person must find his own religious value within his own experience, but having found it he then has a standard of value to which like experiences in other lives may be referred.

The answer is made that no one can observe this value judgment in any experience except his own, because it is entirely subjective. But this is not quite true, for all conscious experience is in this sense entirely subjective. We can not tell that a man has a feeling of pleasure by any direct method of observation. It is only by referring what we observe of the man's mental state to a standard of pleasure which we have in our own consciousness that we can judge him to be pleased. So there must be this reference to our own personal experience in order to judge the results of any psychic analysis. In studying the religious value judgments of other lives we have simply an extreme case of this necessity of reference to a subjective standard.

In studying the life of another we come upon certain phenomena which we recognize as religious, and we know this part of his experience to be religious because we ourselves have had a similar experience and know what it means. This is a species of immediate recognition, for our religious standard has become so a part of our consciousness that through it we immediately recognize that which is like to it. This is not just reasoning by analogy, i. e., when I acted as this man is acting I felt so and so, therefore he must feel so and so. While our knowing the religious value judgments of other people is in a general way by analogy, yet this is usually not an elaborate reasoned process but rather an immediate recognition that what he now has is what we call religion.

Thus we can know more about another's religious life than that it shows certain marks or has characteristic direction. We can observe more about the religious consciousness of another than that it strives to reach a peculiar object, e. g., one that is psychic and superhuman. By sympathetic interpretation and an imaginative entering into this experience of our fellow man we know what his religious life means. This recognition is of the general type of poetic interpretation, only it is more intimate and serious because the issues are real and solemn. It was by this method that Professor James arrived at his wonderful insights as to the meaning of the

religious experiences of other men. It was not necessary for him to have in his own life all those eccentric religious experiences which he so truly describes. It was enough that he had in his own experience the touchstone of interpretation by which he could sympathetically enter into and illuminate those heterogeneous experiences. To this, of course, he added a genius for expression.

Unless the psychology of religion is willing to remain a formal description of the external psychic manifestations of religion it must extend its scope by frankly including this method of interpretation by intimate personal reference. Otherwise it can not at all give the meaning of religion. But no psychologist has been content thus to limit himself in his study of religion. Leuba, one of the most carefully scientific of them all, ends by defining religion as a dynamic relation between man and God.<sup>10</sup> After all it is the real meaning of religion which all students of it wish to find out. This being no less true of the psychologist than of other investigators of religion, he had best openly avow and carefully employ the only method by which the true nature of the religious life can be found.

This more thoroughgoing method of studying religion, which I can only suggest here, is not one of mere introspective analysis. Such self-examination is the initial step in this method. One must come to an understanding with himself as to the meaning of religion, and this will be impossible if he has no personal experience of religion. But this personal standard must be tested by all possible methods of outward reference to the phenomena of religion. We must seek to know what religion has been historically in its various stages of development. We must analyze psychologically many types of religious experience to see what religion has been in the lives of other men. These phenomena must be philosophically interpreted that we may see their connections with other regions of men's interests. Thus by the employment of all means at our command are we to seek to know the essence and meaning of religion. And it is fundamentally important to have in mind what particular method we are using at any given stage of our investigation and to conform to the limitations of that method. But in the use of no method, however scientific, will the investigator ever be able to get away from the necessity of direct reference to the individual religious consciousness.

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<sup>10</sup> *Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*, p. 90; also *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, Vol. II, Nos. 2-3, pp. 312-313.